

SENATE RECORD VOTE ANALYSIS

105th Congress
1st Session

Vote No. 205

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CONDITIONS ON "GLOBAL WARMING" TREATY/Passage

SUBJECT: A resolution to express the sense of the Senate on necessary conditions for any treaty that it may consider to reduce "greenhouse" gas emissions . . . S. Res. 98. Passage.

ACTION: RESOLUTION AGREED TO, 95-0

SYNOPSIS: As passed, S. Res. 98, a resolution to express the sense of the Senate on necessary conditions for any treaty that it may consider to reduce "greenhouse" gas emissions, will express the sense of the Senate that the United States should not sign any protocol or other agreement regarding the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change of 1992 (the "Global Warming" Treaty; also known as the "Rio Treaty"):

- that would require developed countries to limit or to reduce greenhouse gas emissions further without imposing new specific scheduled commitments for developing countries to limit or to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions within the same compliance period; or

- that would result in serious harm to the economy of the United States.

The resolution will also express the sense of the Senate that any such protocol or agreement submitted to the Senate for ratification should be accompanied by a detailed explanation of any legislation or regulatory actions that may be required to implement it, and should also be accompanied by an analysis of the detailed financial costs and other economic impacts that will come from its implementation. The resolution is based on numerous findings, including: that the "Berlin Mandate" that was recently adopted by parties to the existing voluntary global warming treaty called for the adoption of stronger limits on greenhouse gas emissions, but specifically exempted developing countries (including China, Mexico, India, Brazil, and South Korea); that the Secretary of State has called for "legally binding" restrictions on emissions by developed countries; and that the Majority and Minority Leaders of the Senate should appoint a bipartisan group of Senators to monitor the negotiations in Kyoto, Japan, on a new global warming treaty. ("Greenhouse" gases refer to carbon dioxide and certain other gases, such as methane from cattle, in the atmosphere. The amount

(See other side)

YEAS (95)				NAYS (0)		NOT VOTING (5)	
Republican (54 or 100%)		Democrats (41 or 100%)		Republicans (0 or 0%)	Democrats (0 or 0%)	Republicans (1)	Democrats (4)
Abraham	Hutchinson	Akaka	Kennedy			Grams- ²	Bryan- ²
Allard	Hutchison	Baucus	Kerrey				Feinstein- ²
Ashcroft	Inhofe	Biden	Kerry				Harkin- ²
Bennett	Jeffords	Bingaman	Kohl				Reid- ²
Bond	Kempthorne	Boxer	Landrieu				
Brownback	Kyl	Breaux	Lautenberg				
Burns	Lott	Bumpers	Leahy				
Campbell	Lugar	Byrd	Levin				
Chafee	Mack	Cleland	Lieberman				
Coats	McCain	Conrad	Mikulski				
Cochran	McConnell	Daschle	Moseley-Braun				
Collins	Murkowski	Dodd	Moynihan				
Coverdell	Nickles	Dorgan	Murray				
Craig	Roberts	Durbin	Reed				
D'Amato	Roth	Feingold	Robb				
DeWine	Santorum	Ford	Rockefeller				
Domenici	Sessions	Glenn	Sarbanes				
Enzi	Shelby	Graham	Torricelli				
Faircloth	Smith, Bob	Hollings	Wellstone				
Frist	Smith, Gordon	Inouye	Wyden				
Gorton	Snowe	Johnson					
Gramm	Specter						
Grassley	Stevens						
Gregg	Thomas						
Hagel	Thompson						
Hatch	Thurmond						
Helms	Warner						

EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE:

1—Official Business
2—Necessarily Absent
3—Illness
4—Other

SYMBOLS:

AY—Announced Yea
AN—Announced Nay
PY—Paired Yea
PN—Paired Nay

of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is increasing. The "global warming theory" is that increases in greenhouse gases cause the earth's average temperature to rise.)

Those favoring passage contended:

The Clinton Administration recently agreed to the Berlin Mandate. That mandate states that the United States and other developed nations will negotiate binding timetables for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, principally carbon dioxide, and that they will reduce them by specified amounts. That mandate further specifically exempts developing countries from reducing their greenhouse gas emissions. All the developing countries will be asked to do is agree to talk about imposing restrictions on their emissions at a future date. This resolution repudiates the Berlin Mandate. It unequivocally lets the Clinton Administration and the world know that under no circumstances will the Senate agree to such a treaty. If the Clinton Administration returns from the Kyoto, Japan conference in December with such a treaty as a successor to the current, voluntary global warming treaty, it will be rejected. This resolution states that any successor agreement must bind developing nations as well, which will soon be the greatest producers of greenhouse gases. If the developed nations were the only countries bound then the result would be that manufacturing jobs would be moved to countries that were not bound, and emissions would continue to rise. (Making matters even worse, the Europeans are trying to negotiate the right to "trade" pollution shares among greater and lesser polluting European countries, with the result that they would have to make little, if any, reductions; under that plan, the United States would be virtually the only country in the world that would have to make reductions).

Such restrictions would be disastrous for the United States' economy. Industry experts tell us that the result would be the movement overseas of nearly one-third of the chemical and steel production industries, and the total elimination of the aluminum industry in the United States. It would further result in the closing of many petroleum refineries. The AFL-CIO tells us that it estimates that between 1.25 million and 1.5 million high-wage industrial jobs would be lost. DRI/McGraw Hill, a leading economic forecasting firm, estimates that the Nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) would decline by 2 percent to 3 percent, and consumer prices would rise by \$50 billion to \$100 billion annually. Another leading forecasting firm, Charles Rivers Associates, has reached a similar conclusion: it predicts an immediate 1 percent decline in GDP and a 3 percent decline in future years. The economic pain caused from this policy would fall disproportionately on poorer Americans because they contribute a greater share of their income to fuel purchases, and fuel prices would rise by as much as 50 percent. This increase would also disproportionately hurt farmers who use large amounts of fuel and who have been, perhaps unjustly, singled out in some of the proposed solutions being considered by negotiators of the new global warming treaty. For instance, we know that the negotiators are considering: banning the use of diesel fuel; limiting crop production; requiring "plowless" soil preparation; limiting livestock production to reduce methane emissions; restricting the use of fertilizer; restricting timber harvesting; and restricting the processing, manufacturing, and transportation of food products. The devastation that could be caused to American agriculture could turn it from being the bread basket of the world to being an alms basket.

The United States produces approximately 20 percent of the so-called greenhouse gases. It also produces 26 percent of the world's goods. It already uses energy more efficiently, and cleanly, than other countries. The United States' share of greenhouse gas production is declining, and will continue to decline. By 2015 China by itself will surpass the United States in the production of greenhouse gases. Developing countries like China are responsible for the growth in greenhouse gas production, and they are expected to continue to be responsible for most of the growth in the future. Senators definitely do not agree as to whether there is any evidence that the Earth is heating up, but they unanimously agree that the proper response is not to place restrictions only on the developed countries (or even just on the United States, if the Europeans succeed in their emissions trading scheme). This position is not taken by the Administration; it has said that the United States should be ready to lead the way for as long as 40 years before asking the developing countries to limit their emissions.

The Clinton Administration is wrong. It should not be so willing to sacrifice American jobs and wealth. If the United States were to enact restrictions, all of the other countries would laugh all the way to the bank. The United States would not lead; it would march on its own foolish path all by itself. The environmental fanatics in the Clinton Administration could feel very high-minded about themselves, but the American people would suffer. We have therefore offered this resolution. It states that the Senate believes that developing countries should follow the same timetables on emission reductions as developed countries, and that the Senate is not willing to consider any treaty that will cause serious harm to the United States' economy. This resolution is not intended to gloss over differences between Senators on the validity of the global warming theory. Also, we admit that Senators have different interpretations of whether this resolution is intended to impose the same restrictions, as well as the same timetables, on developing countries. However, that point is minor, because it is clear that all Senators will accept nothing less than meaningful restrictions on developing nations, whether they are exactly the same restrictions or not.

While favoring passage, some Senators expressed the following reservations:

Argument 1:

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The global warming theory is a wonderful theory for scaring people on fundraising letters, and it looks really good in computer models and theoretical computations, but it suffers from one huge defect: it is not supported by the evidence. Reality is just refusing to cooperate with global warming theorists. Despite the Federal taxpayers being soaked \$2 billion per year to hire scientists to prove the theory, and to the chagrin of politicians such as the Vice President who champion this type of scam "Chicken Little" science, most of the scientific community has refused to prostitute itself by agreeing that the Earth is rapidly heating up because of greenhouse gas emissions. Certainly there have been individual researchers who have done their best to build the case for that proposition, but they are in the minority. It is possible, as the amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere rise, that those gases may someday have a measurable effect on temperatures, but so far no connection has been established between greenhouse gas emissions and the Earth's temperature, and most scientists have not backed away from stating this fact.

Some of our colleagues, and the Administration, have repeatedly stated that the scientific community now endorses the view that the world is heating up as a result of greenhouse gas emissions. This statement, no matter how often it is made, is unequivocally false. Their favorite number to throw around is that "2,500 scientists" have endorsed the theory. They came up with this number by adding together all of the contributors and reviewers listed in the three Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reports issued in 1996. This number is wrong in a multitude of respects. First, most of those so-called experts are social scientists, government functionaries, or other representatives of the 150 countries that are parties to the existing Rio global climate agreement. Of those contributors and reviewers who can legitimately be called scientists, only a few are climatologists, and even fewer had any input in the Policymakers' Summary; most of the several hundred listed "contributors" are simply specialists who allowed their work to be cited without giving any endorsement of the conclusions reached by the IPCC. In fact, several surveys of the IPCC contributors and reviewers, including by the Gallup organization and by Greenpeace International, have found that half of them do not support those conclusions. Further, the few scientists who were allowed to have a role in writing the conclusion were only allowed to help in writing rough drafts; "policymakers" wrote the reports. As Keith Shine, one of the IPCC's main scientists noted, it is "peculiar" to allow policymakers to "have the final say in what goes into a scientists' report." In stark contrast, we note that 100 eminent climate scientists signed the Leipzig Declaration in 1996, expressing their doubts about the validity of computer-driven global warming forecasts. That action took a good deal of courage, because it instantly jeopardized the likelihood that their institutions would receive any of the \$2 billion in research grants doled out each year by Federal agencies for global-warming research.

Modeling the Earth's weather patterns is very complex. The original, crude computer models on global warming have been improved over the years to include more variables. As those inclusions have been made, the predicted heating effects from greenhouse gases have declined steadily. The supposed danger now is only a fraction of the danger that was once predicted. More importantly, though, is the fact that empirical evidence continues to refute the global warming theory. The largest single empirical fact that is used to support the theory is that the Earth's average temperature this century has risen by 1 degree Centigrade. However, more than half of that rise occurred in the first half of the century before most of the greenhouse gases that have been produced by human activities were released in the atmosphere. Further, scientists tell us that in the past 20 years the lower atmosphere has actually cooled. We also know that even the scientists who most passionately support the global warming theory admit that scientific evidence shows that the variation in temperature that they have measured is well within the normal boundaries of temperature change on Earth. From data such as that obtained from ice cores taken from Greenland (which show weather patterns over the last 100,000 years) scientists have long known that the Earth's climate has always changed and shifted, often dramatically and often over short periods of time. Scientists have long known that there was a mini-ice age in the sixteenth century, and many of them have speculated that the 1-degree change of this century is a natural adjustment from that period. The reality is that no one really knows yet what has caused past temperature shifts, and what is causing current shifts, or even if current shifts are now occurring. Are greenhouse gases in the atmosphere rising? Yes; it is a measurable fact that they are. Is the sky about to fall in as a result? The evidence does not support that conclusion. There is at least as much evidence that the Earth is cooling down as there is that it is heating up. Would it be cooling down more rapidly without greenhouse gases? We do not know. Would it be heating up without those extra greenhouse gases? We do not know. Neither does anyone else. Even if it were true that those gases were raising average world temperatures, that result would not necessarily be bad. We know that many scientists argue that the net effect of warming the world's climate would be positive; they believe that it would just result in milder winters, longer growing seasons, and generally greater prosperity.

We are appalled that the Clinton Administration would be willing to commit to "binding" reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. The general target level that is bandied about for the United States is the 1990 level of emissions. Are we to cut back production to 1990 levels? Are we to have a no-growth policy? The United States could drop emissions to an extent by replacing old equipment with more efficient equipment, and thus, as long as new efficiencies were achieved, continue to grow, but the cost would be high if it required the abandonment of capital equipment that had remaining useful lives. Considering that the preponderance of evidence does not show any need for action, immediate or otherwise, we think at a minimum it would be better to require only new equipment to be more efficient. According to the Stanford Energy Modeling Forum, just requiring capital equipment to be replaced by more energy-efficient equipment would achieve the same results that would come from the limits the Clinton Administration wants to impose at only 20 percent of the cost.

This issue will probably be before the Senate again very soon. On this debate, the Senate is operating under a fairly strict time limit, and it is merely serving notice to the Administration that it needs to change its policy on the proposed new global warming treaty if it wants it to have any chance of passing the Senate. When and if a treaty is presented to the Senate for its approval, the debate will almost certainly be involved. Whether we will support such a treaty will be based on whether it is based on facts rather than alarmists' theories. For now, we are pleased to vote in favor of this resolution to repudiate the Administration's position on a new global warming treaty.

Argument 2:

Though the science is still unsettled, there is enough evidence that the global climate is changing as a result of greenhouse gas emissions to warrant world-wide action. In our opinion, the average world temperature is rising, and scientists tell us that rise in temperature could have disastrous consequences for the world. As a simple matter of prudence, all of the countries of the world need to commit to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, particularly of carbon dioxide, now. Research efforts should of course continue, but enough evidence exists to warrant immediate action. Certainly the evidence is mixed; the Earth's surface temperatures are rising, but at the same time slightly higher measurements of the atmosphere's temperatures show a slight cooling trend. Of course, people live at the surface, and if the average surface temperature changes even slightly the results could be disastrous. Huge portions of the Earth's land mass have been under water before, and they could be under water again if the ice caps were to melt. Scientists tell us that only a few degrees change in the Earth's average temperature are enough to melt the ice caps. We also know that as a matter of undisputed scientific facts: that some gases in the atmosphere help trap heat from the sun; that human activities produce such gases, particularly carbon dioxide; and that the measurable amounts of those gases in the atmosphere are increasing. We also know that the oceans absorb carbon dioxide, but we do not know if they have a saturation point. If that point is reached, the amount of greenhouse gases will start to grow at an incredible pace. Once those gases are in the air, they will be there for approximately 75 years. We are really rolling the dice by allowing the production of greenhouse gases to continue unabated. There is no more mainstream scientific debate as to the validity of the greenhouse gas theory; as attested to by 2,500 scientists, the Earth is heating up, and the dangers to the environment and humanity are real. In the next 100 years, the Earth will be 1 degree to 3 degrees centigrade hotter. A few scientists who have been employed by industries still try to cast doubt on the theory, but everyone knows it is true. Just as the tobacco industry scientists have finally admitted that tobacco is addictive, we think that these few remaining industry scientists will eventually admit that greenhouse gases threaten the world. The Clinton Administration should be commended for its vigor in addressing this critical issue; our only complaint is that it should make greater efforts to press other countries to be equally responsible. For that reason, we are willing to support this resolution.

No arguments were expressed in opposition to passage.